

under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceeding.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, next week, as the Democratic leader has indicated, the Senate will finally get the opportunity to vote on the bill that House and Senate Democrats have both made their No. 1 priority for the entire Congress. S. 1 is a bad bill filled with bad ideas, and I have been crystal clear about opposing it from the very beginning.

But for Democrats themselves, coming up with a compelling rationale for this unprecedented political power grab has been a long and winding road. It started back in 2019. Then, our friends on the left were still trying to wrap their heads around a stunning defeat in the 2016 Presidential election, so the Speaker of the House billed H.R. 1 as a major overhaul for what her party concluded was a profoundly broken democracy.

Then, 2020 changed everything. A Democrat actually won the White House. I guess our democracy wasn't broken after all. This time, apparently, Federal authorities just needed urgent protection from State legislatures running their own elections.

So we are talking about fundamentally the very same bill. And one thing is for certain: Major overhaul doesn't even begin—begin—to describe it. The awful guts are all in there.

There is the plan to forcibly rewrite large portions of the 50 States' respective election laws and the plan to create new, publicly funded accounts not for building roads or bridges, expanding rural broadband, or fighting the opioid epidemic, but just piles of Federal dollars going to yard signs, balloons, and TV ads for candidates at least half of Americans disagree with.

There is the plan to trash a decades-old, bipartisan consensus on the right way to call balls and strikes on elections and turn the even split of the Federal Election Commission into a partisan majority and the one to give that majority new and broader tools

for chilling the rights of citizens to engage in political speech it doesn't like.

It is such a radical proposal that even prominent voices on the left have urged caution. Lawyers from ACLU, no less, have sounded the alarm on its proposed encroachment on free speech. One liberal expert went further, saying that if Democrats think their bill is "essential to secure democracy, they are self-deceived or deceitful." And voters themselves are hardly convinced. When asked about election policies like voter ID, large—large—majorities consistently come down on the opposite side of Washington Democrats. The bill is so transparently opportunistic, the Democrats' spin has failed to even unite their own party here in the Senate. It is a massive takeover of our election system with a fill-in-the-blank rationale. Nobody is fooled, and next week, the Senate will reject it.

THE MIDDLE EAST

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, now on another matter entirely, the House of Representatives will vote today on a bill from Representative BARBARA LEE to repeal one of the key authorities behind nearly two decades of U.S. efforts to fight terrorism: the 2002 authorization for the use of military force. House Democrats claim this vote is an urgent act of congressional oversight, and the Democratic leader has indicated the Senate will take it up with similar zeal.

The right way to address ongoing terrorist threats is a debate certainly worth having. I would have welcomed that debate before the Biden administration began its hasty retreat from Afghanistan without a plan to sustain counterterror missions or support our friends. It is one we should have before we vote to repeal these authorities. Reality is more complicated, more dangerous, and less politically convenient than its supporters actually believe.

The fact is, the legal and practical application of the 2002 AUMF extends far beyond the defeat of Saddam Hussein's regime, and tossing it aside without answering real questions about our ongoing efforts in the region is reckless.

So let's clear up some facts. The 2002 AUMF has been understood for years—years—to apply to a variety of threats emanating from Iraq. Administrations of both parties have cited it as an important legal foundation of our fight against ISIS. It has been used precisely because the ISIS caliphate that stretched into Syria emanated from Iraq after President Obama's withdrawal in 2011.

The 2002 AUMF is important in Iraq today because it provides authority for U.S. forces there to defend themselves from a variety of real, exigent threats. It is arguably even more important in Syria, where our personnel are present against the wishes of the brutal Assad regime, supporting local Kurdish and

Arab forces and conducting strikes against ISIS. And because ISIS and al-Qaida have sometimes diverged, legal analysts have suggested that the 2001 AUMF alone may be insufficient to authorize operations against ISIS.

Do supporters of this repeal fully understand the ways it might limit counterterrorism missions? How about cyber ops? How about support for Kurdish and Arab forces in Syria? How do they propose we respond to growing attacks against our forces and interests in Iraq?

What about the prospects for robust congressional oversight if the President is left to rely on unilateral article II authorities or even less transparent ones? We are learning a lesson in real time about withdrawing from Afghanistan without a plan. We shouldn't make the same mistake here. So I suspect this isn't really about reasserting congressional oversight. After all, when the last administration announced plans to withdraw from Syria and Afghanistan in 2019, two dozen Democrats joined my amendment opposing the decision and reasserting our role in foreign policy. But now, many of our colleagues no longer want to talk about what we should be doing to confront these ongoing threats.

A lot can happen in 2 years, I guess. The political winds have certainly changed. But one thing hasn't changed: The grave threats posed by ISIS, al-Qaida, and other terrorist groups are as real as they have ever been, and repealing AUMFs without agreeing on a set of new authorities up front will only lead to more uncertainty about what we are going to do about them.

For years, U.S. forces have been carefully handing more of the primary responsibilities for counterterrorism to brave local partners. Under the last administration, this allowed our military footprint in Iraq and Syria to shrink dramatically. But the only reason that worked is because our partners have been able to trust that the U.S. military is still authorized to back them up. Today, House Democrats intend to rip out one of the key authorities underpinning that trust.

As I understand it, Democrats don't even intend to stop there. They are also planning to take aim at the 2001 authorities that allow us to keep some of the most dangerous terrorists alive from taking more innocent American lives. The administration says it is looking into how best to close the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, that houses the absolute—absolute—worst of the worst, including Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, the mastermind of the September 11 attack. But thus far, the administration is rather short on details. How does the President plan to do this? Does he intend to break the law and bring terrorists to the United States? Give them expanded legal rights? Further radicalize our prison population? Talk about domestic violent extremism. Or does the President intend to send KSM and his

terrorist cronies to Pakistan or Saudi Arabia before they have faced justice?

Closing Guantanamo Bay will not make Americans safer. It will not bring solace to the victims of terrorism. It will not make America more respected in the world. It won't solve the terrorist threat any more than repealing AUMFs will end their war against us.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Tommy P. Beaudreau, of Alaska, to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF JOHN K. TIEN

Mr. CARPER. Thank you, Madam President. I hope you are well today. Good to see you and our staff.

I rise this morning to applaud the nomination of COL John Tien. He has been selected by our President to serve as the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, a very big job and an important job.

I have the honor of currently serving as the senior member and former chairman of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, which is responsible for, among other things, overseeing the operations of the Department of Homeland Security.

REMEMBERING MADELEINE A. PETERS

Madam President, very sadly, my colleague GARY PETERS, who is the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, lost his mom this week, and he cannot be with us today. Normally, he would be here speaking on behalf of the nomination of Colonel Tien.

His mother, whom I know and personally and dearly—I have known her ever since Gary first joined us—she is a huge Detroit Tigers baseball fan, as am I. I had the pleasure of going with her to baseball games and considered her a kindred spirit.

I just want to, literally, as we think about Senator PETERS and his family this morning—I just want to ask, maybe, for a moment of silence to remember her and the Peters family.

Thank you.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(Moment of silence.)

NOMINATION OF JOHN K. TIEN

Madam President, as many of our colleagues know, the Department of Homeland Security is still a fairly young Agency, created in response to the attacks on September 11, 2001.

I vividly remember the tragic events of that day, a day as beautiful as today—sunshine, blue skies—and then the whole world changed, literally, while I was riding the train from Wilmington to Washington, DC. I recall also, vividly, how the Members of this body pulled together that day and our country pulled together that day. We, with the U.S. House of Representatives, we, with the President George W. Bush, set aside partisan politics, and we created the 9/11 Commission and adopted the great majority of its recommendations.

My recollection was the cochairs of the 9/11 Commission, former Governor of New Jersey, Tom Kean, a Republican, highly regarded, my neighbor across the river, and Lee Hamilton, Congressman from Indiana, who was chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, one of my mentors—he was a Congressman years ago—they led a group, the 9/11 Commission. I think they came to agreement unanimously on 42 recommendations, passed them off to what would become the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. We adopted almost every one of them unanimously, and it did a lot of good for our country and provided a lot of protection for our country, for our homeland.

Among the recommendations that he made was the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and the expansion of our committee's jurisdiction to include homeland security. Before that, we were the Committee on Governmental Affairs, which is important. It was an oversight committee. But with the addition of the Department of Homeland Security, that responsibility grew enormously.

But since then, our committee has taken on a very different purpose. I am proud of the work that we have done that has made Americans safer today.

As someone who was very much involved in helping to stand up and assemble the Department of Homeland Security, I am proud of the way it has grown and matured over the last 20 years. I remain convinced that it is, in large part, the leadership provided by the nominees we confirm in this Chamber that enables the Department of Homeland Security to carry out successfully as its many missions.

The Department of Homeland Security is an Agency with a budget of over

\$50 billion and a staff of almost a quarter million men and women who are collectively responsible for protecting our Nation from many of the threats that we face. From the clear and present threats of both foreign and domestic terrorism to responding to cyber attacks on our critical infrastructure, to helping distribute relief and assistance in the face of natural disasters, there is no shortage of work to be done by that Agency and the men and women who work there every single day.

I often say that leadership is the most important ingredient to the success of almost any organization on this planet. In sports, in business, in government, our leaders set the tone at the top. They lead by their example, and they are the ones who guide their team to accomplish its mission, or, in the case of the Department of Homeland Security, its many missions. That is why it is crucial that the Department of Homeland Security have Senate-confirmed, qualified leadership at its helm.

After years in multiple administrations leaving key Senate-confirmed posts vacant or held on an "Acting" capacity for far too long, this Department needs qualified leaders now more than ever.

It has been without a Senate-confirmed Deputy Secretary for over 3 years. Let me repeat that. This vital Agency has been without a Senate-confirmed Deputy Secretary for more than 3 years. That has to change. With the confirmation of COL John Tien to serve, this body can do something about it, and we can do it today.

The responsibilities of the Deputy Secretary are daunting. Serving as a chief operating officer, the Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security is responsible for the day-to-day business of the Agency and the management of its operations and 250,000 men and women.

Colonel Tien is a proven leader and dedicated public servant. He is a retired U.S. Army colonel, whose 24-year career includes three combat tours in Iraq and national security roles in the Clinton, the George W. Bush, and the Obama White Houses. He has worked hand in glove with people from different perspectives and commands the respect of Republicans and Democrats alike.

For the past decade, COL Tien has been a leader in the private sector, where he has held senior executive roles in our Nation's financial sector and managed complex organizations and operations.

His nomination has drawn bipartisan support. Dozens of national security leaders and experts, including several former military and civilian government officials who served under Democratic and Republican Presidents, have expressed their strong support for Colonel Tien's nomination.

Just a week ago, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, on which I serve, advanced his